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A Day in the Life of a New Teacher

—by Bobbi VanDruff

A Very Serious Van Druff

As my anticipated graduation date grew closer in May 2008, my anxieties about finding a job flourished. I was lucky enough to get hired right away in the community where I reside, at Mansfield High School and I have been teaching here since August.

Somehow, my time seems to have all run together. I teach four sections of Reading and two sections of Writing for the seventh grade. I also teach 11th and 12th grade Journalism. My typical day begins with scooting my two children onto the bus and making my way to the copy room and coffee pot at the school. The day is always a whirlwind and the way my desk looks at the end of it is proof of that. I find myself leaving little notes on my podium that say "slow down!"
Teaching seventh grade has made me appreciate and take great pleasure in the students' diverse personalities and attitudes. I have learned very quickly that a sense of humor goes a long way and that I need to use their changing attitudes to my advantage. For example, I hold a vocabulary review day before exams. The kids didn't seem to be taking it very seriously, so I decided that I needed a serious game face for the reviews. I purchased a stick-on mustache and put it on one day to conduct the review game. They loved it and ever since then, I hand out mustaches to students who play serious vocabulary review games!

My day definitely does not end after school. If I am not holding tutoring hours, I spend about an hour preparing lessons for the next day. Even though I dedicate time after school, I still seem to take work home with me. After I leave

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¡Chile es superbakan! ¿Cachaí?

—by Megan Sprowls

Megan Sprowls, a senior majoring in Spanish and Criminal Justice recently returned from a semester studying in Chile. Much of the traveling she describes in this article was funded by an ISEP travel scholarship she received.

Chilean Flag on Ramparts

As I stepped off the plane in Harrisburg on an early December morning, I couldn't help but think I was dreaming. Was I really home? Could five months really have gone by so fast? Suddenly, reality sank in as the cool chill of winter shivered me to the bone and I realized I wasn't in Chile anymore.

I was home and was going to have to readjust to my normal life back in the States. No more taking a micro to get around the city. No more going out for *jugo natural* and *chorrillana* with my friends. No more empanadas. No more Pacific Ocean view out of my bedroom window. Most difficult of all, no more speaking Spanish all day. I was going to have to readjust to speaking English. These were just a few of the adjustments I was going to have to make over the next few weeks.

The whole way home

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Please, send news, announcements, and contributions to: ksanner@mansfield.edu

Sailboat near in Valparaíso, Chile

The Doll Lady Next Door

–by Judith Sornberger

Dolls by Shirley Nigro-Hill of Rochester, NY

I have an AWA [Alternative Work Assignment] grant and a faculty-student research grant to work on a project tentatively called The Doll Lady Next Door (although I hate that title). I come from several generations of doll collectors and doll makers, and I have found that, try as I might, I couldn't escape the dread disease of doll collecting. In my younger days I wrote a small collection of doll poems, thinking that that would be my capitulation to the doll obsession. However, it was not to be, and over the last twelve years or so I have succumbed, so much so that the largest room in our home is the "doll room." But I digress.

Over these last twelve years I have met many doll collectors, doll vendors, doll and doll house shop owners, and doll artists. These are, for the most part, women, and over the last few years I have begun to think about the ways that the world of dolls connects women across generations, ethnicities, social classes, religions, political parties, and careers. I have been fascinated by the ways that an industry that has often been vilified by feminists for reinforcing rigid gender roles (via baby dolls and Barbie dolls) also has been a venue for women's creativity, involving both some of the traditional artistic media such as sculpture and painting as well as artistic skills traditionally associated with women, such as sewing. I also have been struck by the ways that women use doll collecting as a way to escape from high stress careers and family concerns by, if you will, "playing dolls." Sometimes this involves redressing dolls or displaying them in vignettes. Dolls also have provided opportunities for healing, for spiritual exploration, and for storytelling for women artists and collectors.

Medieval Troubadour by Karen Robertson of Honeoye Falls, NY

My project involves interviewing women from all the above-mentioned categories, all living within a three-hour radius of the Mansfield/Wellsboro area. I want to show how deeply the doll culture goes, even within a small area such as this. My student assistant, Katey Tripoli, an MU art history graduate and a current graduate student in Education/Special Education, will be helping me with interviews, editing, and creating a presentation for the campus community. I see the final product as a book that is a kind of hybrid: a study of doll collecting and doll artists, an examination of the historical, generational, spiritual and artistic aspects of the doll world, and a personal narrative. What I am really trying to do is weave together the stories of many dolls and the women who make and love them.

Roving Reporter

If you were stranded somewhere (on an island, in a tree house, etc.) with only one book, which book would you want it to be and why?

Dr. Flor Blanco: There are many books that I love, each of them for different reasons, and it is difficult to choose one, but if I were stranded somewhere, I would select the *Bible*. Why? Because I would need a lot of inner strength not to go crazy. So far I have read only excerpts of it, and...who knows? After finishing it, I might be rescued.

Sarah-Stevie-Derrick: I would love to be stranded up in a tree house on a desert island with a copy of *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, or should I say...*Théâtre complet de Shakespeare*. This book would have to be at least in the French translation, but even better, would be a parallel translation with one side being in French, and the other in English. Crazy you say? I think not.

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¡Chile es superbakan! ¿Cachaí?

–by Megan Sprowls

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Megan Sprowls with Chilean Flag

from the airport I thought about the many amazing experiences I had while spending my fall semester studying at the Pontificía Universidad Católica in Valparaíso and traipsing around South America. I thought about the many friends I had made, the families I had stayed with, the things I had learned, and the many trips I had made while my eyes readjusted to the rolling hills of the Pennsylvania landscape.

Before my trip, I had never been on a plane, never been out of the U.S., never taken public transportation, never lived in a city, and most definitely had never been to a place where English was not the language spoken. I thought about how I, a small-town country girl from Middle-of-Nowhere, PA, had cried my eyes out so many times during my stay in Chile due to homesickness, and, for the first time, realized that I was going to cry even harder now that I had returned home. I was already really starting to miss my family, friends, and way of life in Chile. I thought about how much my eyes had been opened and how much my life had been enriched by the experiences during my trip abroad. I knew I would never see the world the same and that this trip, in many ways, had changed me as a person forever.

I really do believe that everyone, not only foreign language majors, should spend a semester abroad. It's hard to understand just how much a study abroad experience can do to make a person so much more worldly, culturally aware, and tolerant of different people.

While I did encounter some family placement problems, I don't have a single regret about my semester abroad, other than that I wish I had gone for a whole year. While abroad I practiced the language I love, learned about the cultures of South America, celebrated Chile's Independence Day, went horseback riding in the hometown of Gabriela Mistral, visited all of Pablo Neruda's houses, biked my way through the vineyards of Mendoza, Argentina, went snowboarding in the Andes, hiked Machu Picchu in Peru, and much more. My study abroad trip was truly an experience I wouldn't trade for anything in the world!

Alumni News

Erin Delaney's poem "america, to Allen," which she wrote in Dr. Sornberger's poetry class back in 2001, will be published in "Poems Against War: Bending Toward Justice."

Ed Kozaczka, English BSE, 2007 will graduate from Binghamton University this May with an MA in English Literature. Kozaczka will begin studying in the Ph.D. program at the University of Southern California in the fall. USC has offered him six years of full funding, including a two year fellowship. He was accepted into four Ph.D. programs, but selected USC because of its excellent program, generous funding package and sunny location.

Kenny Seaboldt *(2004) recently wrote to his former German professor at Mansfield, Dr. Brad Holtman and shared some interesting ways in which he uses his language skills. He was actually a music major but often appeared in Dr. Holtman's office just to hang out and chat. Seabolt also studied abroad in England and loved it.*

Most students leave Mansfield and don't use their learned language skills in everyday situations. I, however, use German just about every day as I am now working as youth staff with Royal Caribbean International. A foreign language is required to be offered a contract in Europe, so I revisit my German textbook often. I also will

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A Day in the Life of a New Teacher

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school, I pick up my children from day care and head to after-school sports or activities.

It hasn't been a year since I graduated, and it seems as though I am drawn to the classroom in all aspects. I started graduate classes at my alma mater on the hill in January. So, now my evenings are spent either in class or doing coursework! Needless to say, I drink massive amounts of coffee.

Megan Sprowls in Reñaca, Chile

Roving Reporter

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Shakespeare is my favorite author, and French is yet another one of my passions. I could amuse myself for hours- reading and translating the French. Then, if I got lost or confused, I could always reference the English side for assistance. Shakespeare was a brilliant writer, and on top of that, this book has everything in it: love, war, comedy, tragedy, religion, controversy, sex, and even violence. It holds plenty of entertainment and issues to ponder, what else could anyone ask for?

Matt Lynn, BA English: If I were stranded on an island with one book, I would pick my *Complete Works of Shakespeare*, because it is the only book I own that might be big enough to make a raft. That, and I really like Shakespeare.

Dr. Tom Murphy: If I were going to be in some isolated place with only one book, one choice might be Thoreau's *Walden* as a model of how to use isolation to search out the meaning of life. But Thoreau didn't take *Walden*; he wrote it. That may be the key: if I am to be in some place, I would want a book that would deepen my understanding of that place, help me to be there completely rather than to feel the need to escape. The best book for that would be a blank one so that I could spend my time turning the place and my experience of it into text, reading the place as I write it.

Dr. Lynn Pifer: I normally don't answer stuck on a desert island questions. Why would I ever end up on a desert island? However, if I were stuck in a cabin in the middle of a snowstorm, I would be making myself a hot toddy and reading David Bradley's *The Chaneysville Incident*. It's been one of my favorite novels for a long time, and it's long enough to keep me entertained for a while and complex enough to stand up to a number of re-readings. Set in rural Pennsylvania, it features one of those early March blizzards that we usually get during our spring breaks (and, yes, a description of how to make a good hot toddy). I wish I was reading it now, but I lent my copy to a student before break.

Q & A with Emily Cole

Emily Cole is a senior English Major from Athens, Pennsylvania. She shares her responses to questions about her experiences at Mansfield (and abroad) posed by Kristin Sanner.

Q--When and why did you decide to study English at MU?
A--Mansfield was not initially a school that I really wanted to attend. I didn't really like the idea that so many people from my hometown end up going to Mansfield, and I really wanted to find a school that was less familiar. However, after I came to Mansfield and met with some people, I really started to think that it was a place for me.
As far as studying English, I had that goal figured out around my junior year in high school. My mom was always really shocked that I never changed my mind from that point.
Q--Describe some of the highlights of your experience here.
A--As far as my strictly Mansfieldian experience, I started out in the honors program, became a member of Sigma Tau Delta [English Honor Society], and was entered in a couple of essay contests. I think that I have managed to accomplish a lot in school here. Also, last fall, I did go to Vaxjo University in Sweden for a semester. That was a huge highlight for my college experience. Since high school, I have always tried to make an effort to put myself in situations which are difficult for me, such as being completely alone in a foreign country. I like to push myself and just prove that I can do things like that successfully. Actually, I just recently applied to return to Sweden for a Masters in American Lit at Uppsala University.
Q--What made you decide to return to Sweden for your graduate school education?
A--Going to Sweden was probably one of the best experiences I've had in my life; I really enjoyed the country. The classes I took there were interesting, and I think to study American Lit. there would offer a different perspective than studying in America. When it comes down to it, applying to Uppsala was something I felt that if I didn't try, it would probably bother me forever. I won't find out if I've actually been accepted until May, but it's just good to know that I've actually tried for it.
Q--Looking back, what would you have changed about your experience at MU?
A--I really don't know if I would change much about my Mansfield years. Probably, if you had asked me this freshman year, I would have had some smart answer, but now that I'm almost graduating, I think I'm pretty happy with the way my time has been spent here.
Q--What are your long-range, post-graduation plans?

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Alumni News

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be starting a refresher course using Rosetta Stone.

I have been just about everywhere in North America and have seen many things. I worked for Princess Cruises for 5 years and just switched to Royal Caribbean. I have lots of stories to share. I'm eventually going back to school for my Masters in Adult Education and Human Resources from Penn State. Working on a ship lets me save A LOT of money and I won't have loans.

I have a great job and knowing a second language helps out tremendously. I'm trying to learn Spanish as well as on this run from Puerto Rico. Not knowing Spanish is proving difficult, especially given my position working with children who do not speak English.

"Forever Always" - Octavio Ocampo

Most people just get older, and they find parking spaces, honor their credit cards, choose personal preferences in drink, have the nerve to get married and have children, and they call that growing up. That's not. That's getting older.

Maya Angelou (1928-)

Faculty News

Lilace Guignard's essay "Public Land and Private Fears: Reclaiming Outdoor Spaces in Gretchen Legler's Sportswoman's Notebook**"** was published in *Inside Out: Women Negotiating, Subverting, Appropriating Public and Private Space,* edited by Teresa Gómez Reus and Aránzazu Usandizaga.

Dr. Brad Holtman, who is currently on sabbatical, recently had a book review published in *Die Unterrichtspraxis.*

Dr. William Keeth, presented his paper "El mar y la poesía de la Generación del 50" at the *Rocky Mountain Council for Latin American Studies* in Santa Fe, New Mexico on March 4th, 2009. He also published "La experimentación paradigmática surrealista en la poesía de Emilio Adolfo Westphalen y César Moro" in volume 9.10 of *Cuadernos del CILHA: Revista del Centro Interdisciplinario de Literatura Hispanoamericana.*

Dr. Lynn Pifer presented her paper, "Telling Trauma: Writing the 'buried truth' in Anthony Grooms' *Bombingham,*" at the College English Association conference in Pittsburgh, PA, on March 27, 2009. This conference paper is part of a draft of a chapter for her book-in-progress, *Literary Legacy of the Civil Rights Movement*.

Sigma Tau Delta

Sigma Tau Delta News

MU XI, the Mansfield Chapter of the International English Honor Society, Sigma Tau Delta, will induct seven members at a ceremony in April. New members include: Emily R. Cole, Elizabeth Dean, Brittany Estep, Angie Farrer, Evelyn Martin, Greg Myers, and Mary Thomas.

The group also plans to travel to Ithaca in April in order to attend a performance of *Tartuffe*.

For information about the organization, contact one of the following advisors: Dr. Kristin Sanner (ksanner@mansfield.edu), Dr. Jimmy Guignard (jguignar@mansfield.edu), or Dr. John Ulrich (julrich@mansfield.edu).

Q & A with Emily Cole

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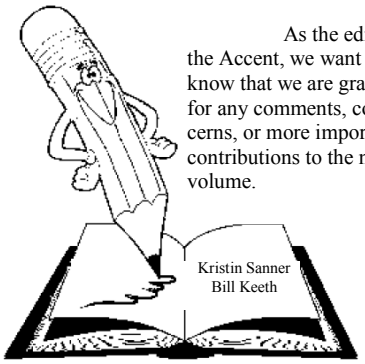
A--Post graduation plans are definitely not set in stone yet. I have applied to Uppsala, but there is no way of knowing if I'll get in, or even have time to get Visas and everything set before the semester starts. If that doesn't work out for me , then the current plan is to work for a year, and then apply to grad schools around here. Either way, I do see myself going to grad school, and hopefully getting a teaching job at a university eventually.

Q--How do you think MU has helped prepare you for those goals?

A--My time at Mansfield has given me a lot of help for my future goals. I've gained a lot of educational and life experience which I will be able to apply to whatever I end up doing, wherever I end up going.



As the editors of the Accent, we want you to know that we are grateful for any comments, concerns, or more importantly contributions to the next volume.

Kristin Sanner
Bill Keeth